

ACTION AF-00

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INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 USNW-00 DODE-00
 PERC-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 OIGO-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
 IO-00 LAB-01 L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 DCP-01 NSAE-00
 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 DHS-00 OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00
 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SP-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 EPAE-00
 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-01 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00
 SWCI-00 /008W

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P 291246Z APR 03
 FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0302
 INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

~~DENIED IN FULL~~
~~B1, 1.4(D), B5~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 MONROVIA 000511

DEPT FOR AF/W DIRECTOR ARIETTI AND AF/DAS BRIDGEWATER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2013
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, NSC, UN, LI
 SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CEASEFIRE TALKS/ROUNDTABLE AND
 ICGI

REF: MONROVIA 25

CLASSIFIED BY: JOHN W. BLANEY, AMBASSADOR, FOR REASONS 1.5 (A) AND (D)

1. ~~(U)~~ SUMMARY: LIBERIA IS GOING INTO A DANGEROUS NATIONAL
 MELTDOWN, INCLUDING INCREASING ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND SPREADING
 HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. TAYLOR IS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE, BUT
 WILL CLING TO POWER LONGER BECAUSE HE FEARS THE UN,S WAR
 CRIMES TRIBUNAL IN SIERRA LEONE. NO SUCCESSOR TO TAYLOR IS
 IN THE WINGS, SO SOME PROCEDURAL PROVISION OF LEGITIMACY TO
 ANY SUCCESSOR IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO AVOID A BLOODY
 STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND POSSIBLE NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION. ☐

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☐ THE INTERNATIONAL CONTACT
 GROUP/UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S "COMPREHENSIVE
 APPROACH" TOWARDS LIBERIA AFFORDS THE BEST AND ONLY VISIBLE
 HOPE FOR INCREASING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STABILITY, AVOIDING
 NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION, AND REPLACING TAYLOR PEACEFULLY.

B5

END SUMMARY

2. ~~(U)~~ BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS: A FEW MONTHS AGO, THE ECONOMIST
 MAGAZINE DUBBED LIBERIA AS THE WORST PLACE IN THE WORLD.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL
 APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED
 REASON(S): B5, B1, 1.4(D)
 DATE/CASE ID: 28 APR 2009 200604067

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN S BLODGETT
 DATE/CASE ID: 01 OCT 2007 200604067

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THINGS HAVE DECLINED SINCE THEN. LIBERIA NOW HAS NOT ONE, BUT TWO VIOLENT REBELLIONS UNDERWAY. THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION HAS BECOME A CRISIS WITH 11 OF 15 COUNTIES NOW CUT OFF FROM INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSISTANCE. LIBERIA'S PAST AND RECENT MARAUDING ACTIVITIES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN RESPONDED TO IN KIND, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] STRANGELY, THE FEELING ON THE GROUND HERE IS NOT SIMPLY THAT IT IS NOW "PAYBACK TIME" FOR LIBERIA'S MANY SINS, BUT MORE ONE OF SPREADING CHAOS AND BLOODSHED.

THE EMERGING TRIPLE THREAT: "RWANDA WEST"/"SOMALIA WEST"/"BURUNDI WEST"

3. (C) THERE APPEAR TO BE MAJOR DOWNSIDES EMERGING FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION. CONFLICTS IN LIBERIA AND NEARBY ARE TAKING ON PROGRESSIVELY STRONGER DIMENSIONS OF ETHNIC AND TRIBAL HATRED. WE HAVE HEARD GROWING REPORTS OF SMALL ETHNIC MASSACRES AND ATROCITIES CONDUCTED BY LURD (OF GIOS), AND OF A LARGE RETALIATORY MASSACRE ALLEGEDLY LED BY TAYLOR'S GENERAL YEATEN (OF MANDINGOS) NEAR DISPUTED GANTA. WE ARE ALSO STARTING TO HEAR ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY MODEL, INCLUDING AN ALLEGED ETHNIC-BASED MASSACRE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN NEAR GREENVILLE. THIS PATTERN COULD WELL BE THE HARBINGER OF FUTURE CONFLICT. WHEN BACKED INTO A CORNER, TAYLOR AND OTHER WARLORDS READILY STIR ETHNIC HATRED AND VIOLENCE TO IMPROVE THEIR POSITIONS, AND HAVE DONE SO IN THE PAST. IN FACT, IN AN OBVIOUS EFFORT TO SPLIT LURD, A GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER HEADLINE RECENTLY BLARED, "MANDINGOES KILLING KRAHNS".

4. (C) THIS TIME, ONCE IGNITED, IT MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE TO CONTAIN THE WILDFIRE OF ETHNIC AND TRIBAL HATRED. LIBERIA IS DISINTEGRATING AS A RECOGNIZABLE NATION-STATE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESSENTIALLY OPTED OUT OF ANY SUPPORT OF ITS INCREASINGLY DESPERATE CITIZENS. HEALTH CARE AND BASIC SERVICES HAVE ALL ESSENTIALLY STOPPED, AND LIBERIA IS NOW AN INCUBATOR FOR DISEASE. EDUCATION HAS ALL BUT COLLAPSED. UNEMPLOYMENT IS AT LEAST 85 PER CENT IN A LAND OF ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES (E.G. GOLD, DIAMONDS, RUBBER, TIMBER, OIL, ETC.). THE INTERNATIONAL

RELIEF COMMUNITY IS SCARED AND UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE TURMOIL. THE CULTURE OF WAR IS BECOMING ENTRENCHED, WITH CHILD SOLDIERS CARRYING ITS BANNERS. COMPARATIVELY BATTLE-HARDENED LIBERIAN MERCENARIES LOOK HUNGRILY AT NEIGHBORS, LIKE SIERRA LEONE AND RICHER IVORY COAST, WHOSE ARMIES ARE SOFT. WHEN THE UN PEACEKEEPERS HAVE "DRAWN DOWN", AND THE FRENCH ARMY GOES HOME, THEY WILL BE WAITING.

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5. (C) EVEN THE ROADS ARE BEGINNING TO DISAPPEAR. OVER TIME, WE ARE SEEING THE GRADUAL EMERGENCE OF SOME SORT OF ETHNICALLY BOUNDED, MEDIEVAL-LIKE PRINCIPALITIES, RUN BY LOCAL WARLORDS. IT IS A NICE QUESTION, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER NIMBA COUNTY IS STILL A PART OF LIBERIA. DOZENS OF INDEPENDENT LOCAL MILITIA ROADBLOCKS HAVE SPRUNG UP THAT DO NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM MONROVIA OR ITS TROOPS.

6. (S)

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FOR ALL ITS WRONGDOINGS AS A NATION-STATE, LIBERIA DOES NOT PERMIT THESE ACTIVITIES. BUT SOON, LIBERIA

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A WILL ALSO BECOME MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT CONTINUE TO FRAGMENT. THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA'S (GOL,S) CEASEFIRE TALKS WITH LURD COULD BE UNDERMINED IF MODEL DISAVOWS THEM. LURD ITSELF APPEARS TO BE SPLINTERING.

8. (S) WE DOUBT THAT TAYLOR CONTROLS ALL HIS FORCES ANYMORE. AT SOME POINT, ONE OR MORE OF TAYLOR'S MILITIAS MAY OPENLY BREAK AWAY FROM HIS YOKE. IN FACT, WE THINK THAT TAYLOR'S ANTI-TERRORISM UNIT (ATU) AND ESPECIALLY LOCAL MILITIA FORCES ARE ACTING WITH GREATER AUTONOMY AND WITH LESS PREDICTABILITY AT CHECKPOINTS. NIMBA COUNTY,S DE FACTO SUCCESSION FROM THE UNION MAY SOON BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER PARTS OF LIBERIA. AFTER ALL, TAYLOR IS NO LONGER PAYING MOST OF HIS ARMED FORCES IN LIBERIA, EVEN SPORADICALLY.

WAITING IN THE WINGS?

9. (S) IT IS CRITICAL TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE VERY FEW GOOD GUYS IN SIGHT, READY TO JUMP-IN AND SAVE THE DAY. THE MAJOR REBEL GROUP, THE LURD, HAS STEPPED-UP ATROCITIES AND ARE DEEPLY FEARED BY MANY, NOT ONLY FOR THEIR ACTIONS, BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE MOSTLY MUSLIM.

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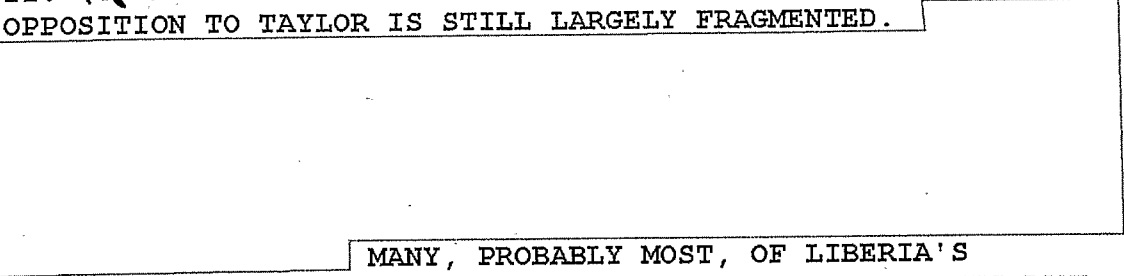
10. (S) ACCEPTING TAYLOR OR THE KHRAN,S MODEL, FOR MOST

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MONROVIANS, IS YET ANOTHER SAD HOBSON'S CHOICE. MODEL'S GENERAL JULU HAS QUITE A BLOODY BACKGROUND, LINKED TO PRESIDENT SAMUEL DOE AND THE 1990 CIVILIAN MASSACRE AT ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MONROVIA, AND TO ULIMO. ROOSEVELT JOHNSON NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION TO US, AND ALSO APPEARS TO BE INVOLVED. IN SUM, THE LEADERS OF MODEL ALSO DO NOT DWELL IN MR. ROGERS, NEIGHBORHOOD.

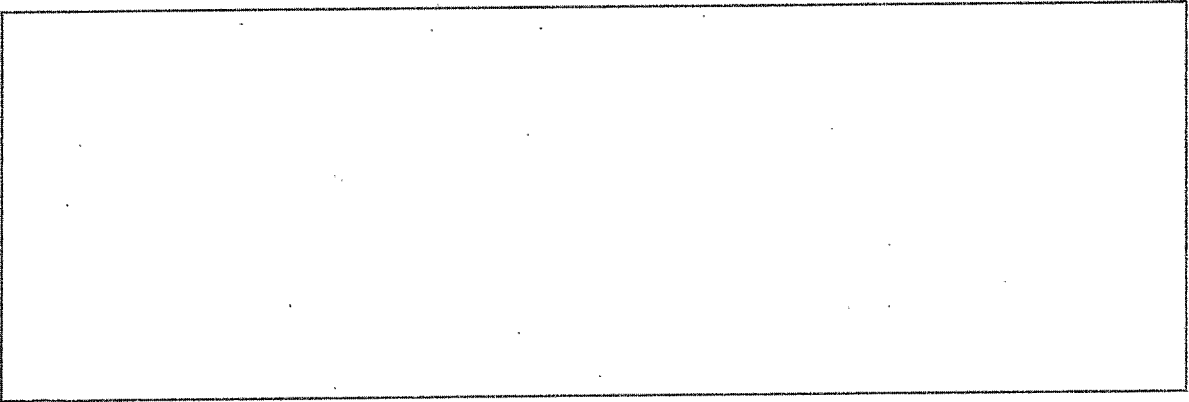
11. (S) LIBERIA'S TRAGEDY RUNS EVEN DEEPER. POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO TAYLOR IS STILL LARGELY FRAGMENTED.



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MANY, PROBABLY MOST, OF LIBERIA'S TALENTED PEOPLE HAVE LONG SINCE DEPARTED THIS SUFFERING LAND. MANY TALK OF RETURNING FROM THE UNITED STATES OR ELSEWHERE, BUT HOW MANY ACTUALLY WOULD DO SO, EVEN WITH A BETTER REGIME IN POWER? BRUMSKINE THINKS ENOUGH WOULD RETURN FROM THE DIASPORA TO JUMP-START LIBERIA, BUT WE ARE LESS CERTAIN.

12. (S) AS PRESSURE MOUNTS ON TAYLOR (SEE BELOW) WE MUST ALSO CONTINUE TO EXAMINE THE LOYALTY OF HIS OWN STALWARTS. SIMPLY PUT, FEWER AND FEWER OF THEM ARE RECEIVING ENOUGH RETURNS FOR THEIR LOYALTY. THE TAYLOR REGIME IS LIKE A WOUNDED SHARK FEEDING ON ITS OWN ENTRAILS. TAYLOR'S DEPARTURE INTO EXILE OR OTHER VOLITIONAL TAYLOR-EXIT SCENARIOS ARE, HOWEVER, NOW LESS LIKELY THAN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD SEEM TO DICTATE BECAUSE TAYLOR IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE UN'S TRIBUNAL TAKING HIM INTO CUSTODY. HE WOULD FIGHT AND DIE FOR HIS BLOODY THRONE RATHER THAN GO ON TRIAL AS A WAR CRIMINAL ONCE HE STEPS DOWN.



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TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO LIBERIA

14. (S) AS THE UNSC PANEL OF EXPERTS CORRECTLY NOTES, "THE

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REGION IS AWASH IN WEAPONS." THE GAPING AND LONG-STANDING HOLE IN THE UNSC LIBERIA SANCTIONS PROGRAM, OMITTING A BAN ON LIBERIA'S TIMBER EXPORTS, SHARPLY LIMITED THE PROGRAM'S EFFICACY. (PERHAPS MODEL'S RECENT MILITARY GAINS WILL PREVENT TIMBER HARVESTING FROM RESUMING NEXT SEASON, ALTHOUGH THIS REMAINS TO BE SEEN.) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] THE RECENT INVOLVEMENT OF LIBERIA IN WESTERN IVORY COAST MAKES A CONVINCING CASE THAT EXISTING UNSC SANCTIONS AND SOME BEEFING-UP OF

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H THE DIRECTION OF CHAOS MAY HAVE BEEN AFFECTED FOR THE TIME BEING. [REDACTED]

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15. (S) YET, UNSC SANCTIONS CAN STILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IF USED IN TANDEM WITH A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH THAT BRAVELY TACKLES THE INTERNAL CAUSES OF LIBERIA'S CONTAGIOUS SOCIAL MADNESS. PRESIDENT TAYLOR IS CERTAINLY A MAJOR PART OF THE PROBLEM. HOWEVER, AS THE BRIEF NARRATIVE ABOVE ARGUES, THE PROBLEMS OF AND THREATS EMANATING FROM THIS FAILED STATE RUN VERY DEEP, AND WOULD BE FORMIDABLE TO ADDRESS EVEN WITHOUT TAYLOR.

A REGIME UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE

16. (S) THE TAYLOR REGIME IS PROBABLY UNDER MORE PRESSURE NOW THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE ITS ONSET IN 1997. IT IS EMBATTLED BY TWO (IN OUR VIEW) LARGELY SEPARATE REBEL GROUPINGS, LURD AND MODEL. IT IS CLEARLY HAVING DIFFICULTY EJECTING LURD FROM GANTA, AND MAY RETALIATE DIRECTLY INTO GUINEA IN RESPONSE TO ITS INCREASINGLY OVERT SUPPORT OF LURD. MODEL IS ALSO ADVANCING IN THE SOUTHEAST, AND PERHAPS SOON TOWARDS BUCHANAN AND MONROVIA.

17. (S) JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, LIBERIAN CITIZENS ARE DESPERATE AND DEMONSTRATING FOR PEACE. THEY ARE FED-UP WITH TAYLOR'S REGIME AND RESENTFUL OF THEIR DOWNWARD-SPIRALING LIVING CONDITIONS. THERE ARE ALSO MULTIPLE SIGNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS ESSENTIALLY BANKRUPT, NOT JUST BECAUSE OF WAR, [REDACTED] THERE ARE EVEN SOME INDICATIONS OF DISAFFECTION WITHIN TAYLOR'S OWN MILITARY FORCES AND SOME SIGNS OF UNWILLINGNESS TO CONDUCT ENDLESS WAR WITHOUT PAY. EVEN TAYLOR'S OWN INNER CIRCLE ARE

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STRAPPED AND MUTTERING ABOUT HIM.

18. ~~(S)~~ THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT OUR VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO CONFRONT TAYLOR AT HOME HAS PUT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON HIM AND HIS REGIME. HAVING SAID THAT, WE THINK THAT THE STRATEGIC WEAKNESSES OF THE TAYLOR REGIME OUTLINED ABOVE ALSO HELP EXPLAIN WHY HE RECENTLY MADE TWO MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO US, AND LATER TO THE ICGL; THAT IS, AGREEING TO THE UN-LED NEEDS ASSESSMENT TEAM AND REVERSING HIS VOW NEVER TO HAVE THE GOL MEET DIRECTLY WITH LURD. THESE CONCESSIONS REPRESENT A SHARP DEPARTURE FROM TAYLOR'S PENCHANT FOR DEALING WITH OTHER AFRICAN HEADS-OF-STATE IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SECURITY PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, TAYLOR PRESSED HARD TO MEET LAST WEEKEND WITH PRESIDENT GBAGBO IN ORDER TO SEEK RELIEF FROM MODEL, BUT NOT WITH ANY MEMBERS OF MODEL ITSELF.

19. ~~(S)~~ ALTHOUGH TAYLOR STILL HAS OTHER VIABLE OPTIONS, SUCH AS LAUNCHING POGROMS AND SPREADING EVEN MORE CHAOS ABROAD AND IN LIBERIA, HE FEELS THE HEAT, AND NOW IS A TIME OF SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY AND LEVERAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY-- IF IT CAN ACT EFFECTIVELY.

NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

20. ~~(S)~~ AS WASHINGTON KNOWS, THE UPCOMING MEETINGS ON LIBERIA IN GHANA WILL LIKELY BE TWO SIMULTANEOUS, INTERRELATED MEETINGS. THE LARGER ONE WILL BE CALLED THE &ROUNDTABLE8.

APPARENTLY, THE ICGL CO-CHAIRS, IN CONSULTATION WITH TAYLOR, HAVE LIMITED THE ROUNDTABLE SESSION TO: THE GOL, LURD, AND THE 18 POLITICAL PARTIES, PLUS A NUMBER OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AS OBSERVERS. IT IS UNCLEAR WHO WILL CHAIR THE ROUNDTABLE, BUT THE GOL SEES THIS FUNCTION AS GOING TO A NON-LIBERIAN.

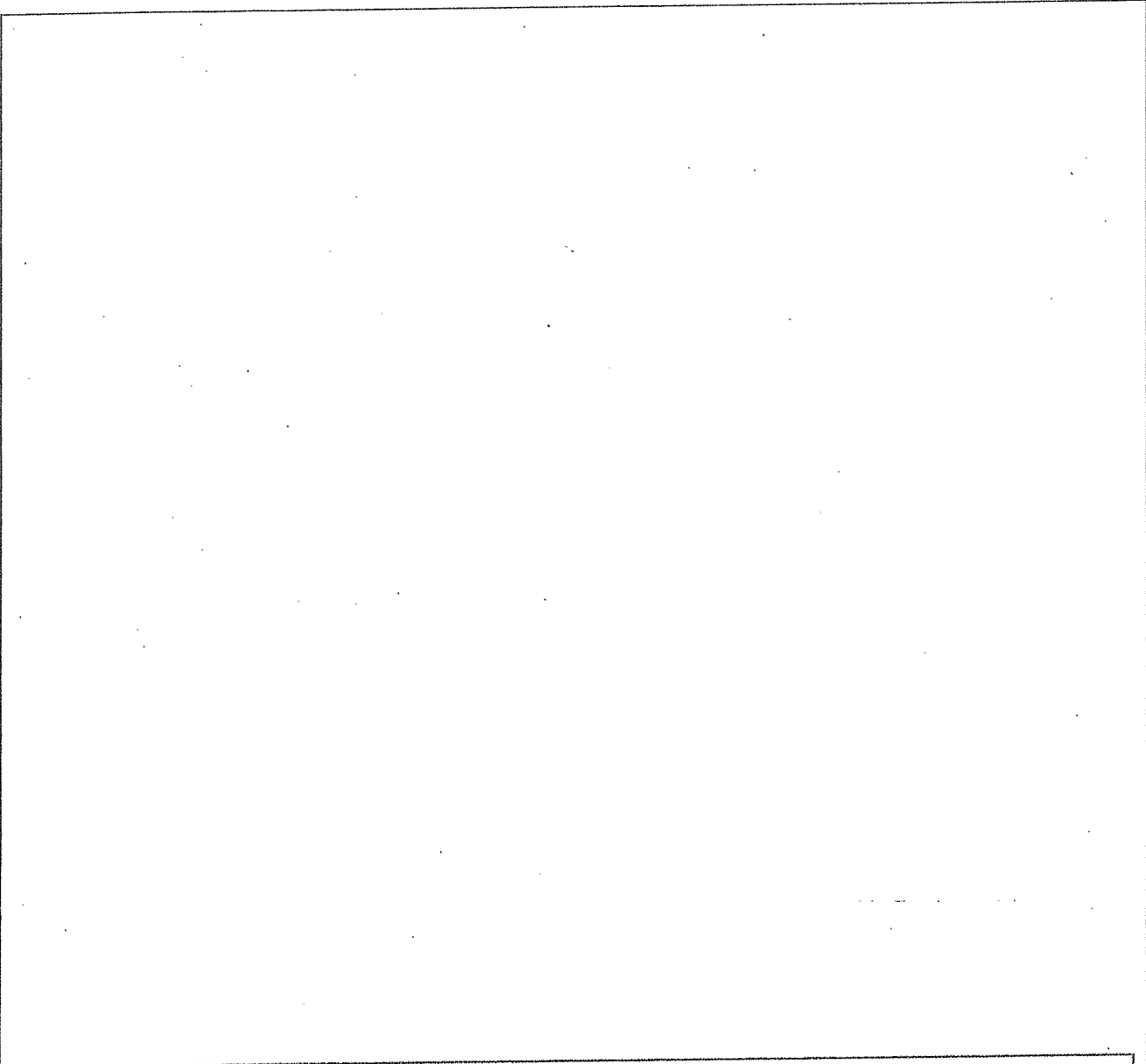
21. ~~(S)~~ THE CEASEFIRE TALKS WILL BE HELD AS A SIDEBAR MEETING, AND PROBABLY SIMULTANEOUS TO THE LARGER ROUNDTABLE SESSION. THE COMPOSITION IS ESTABLISHED AS: GOL, LURD, ICGL CO-CHAIRS, USG AND GENERAL ABUBAKAR AS THE LIKELY FACILITATOR AND CHAIR OF THE SESSION. THE UN (PROBABLY UNOL) MAY MAKE IT AS AN ADD-ON. IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR WHETHER ECOWAS WILL BE REPRESENTED BY ABUBAKAR OR HAVE A SEPARATE REPRESENTATIVE.

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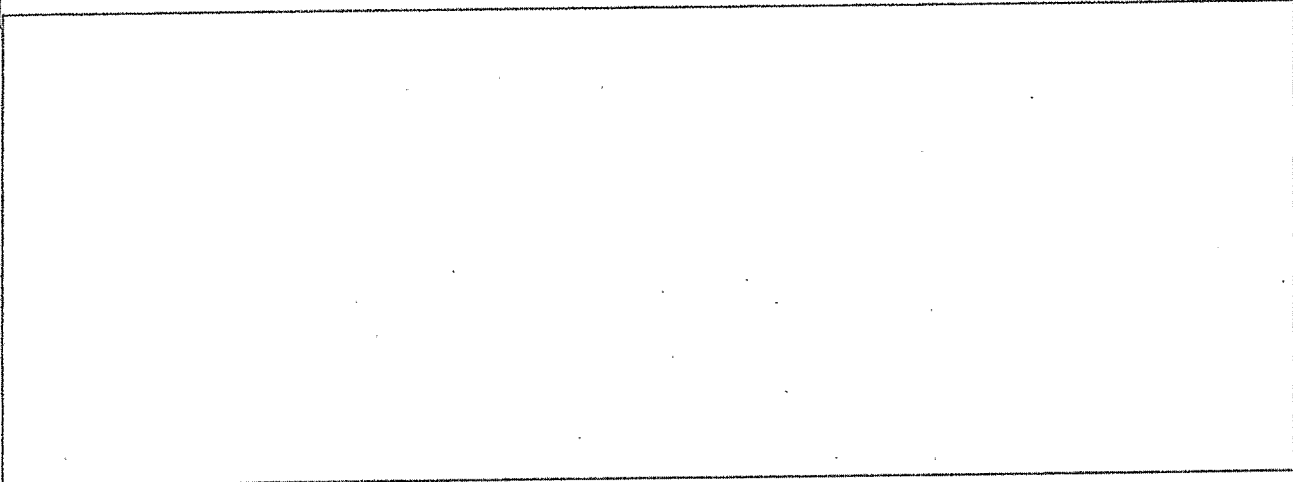
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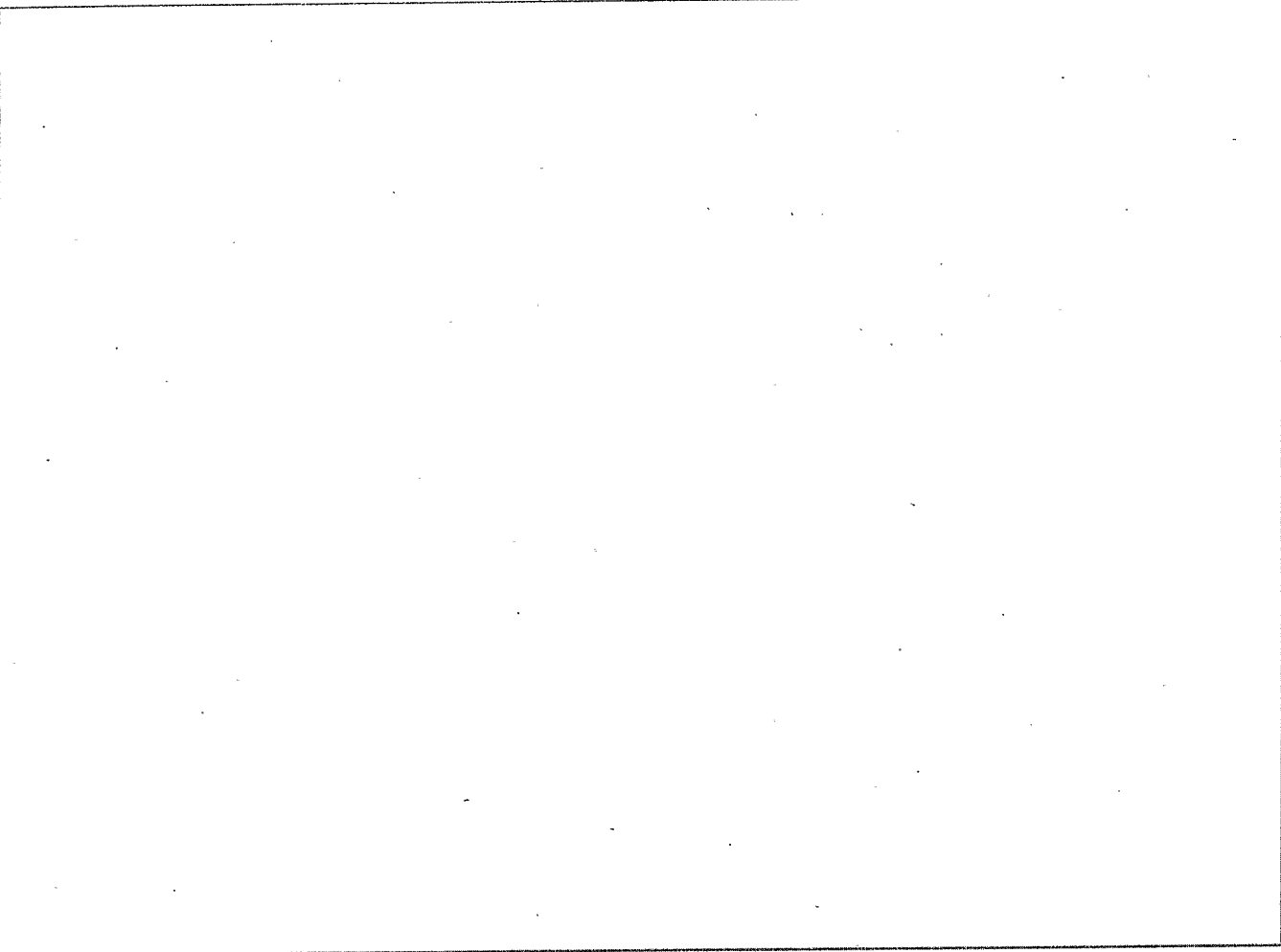
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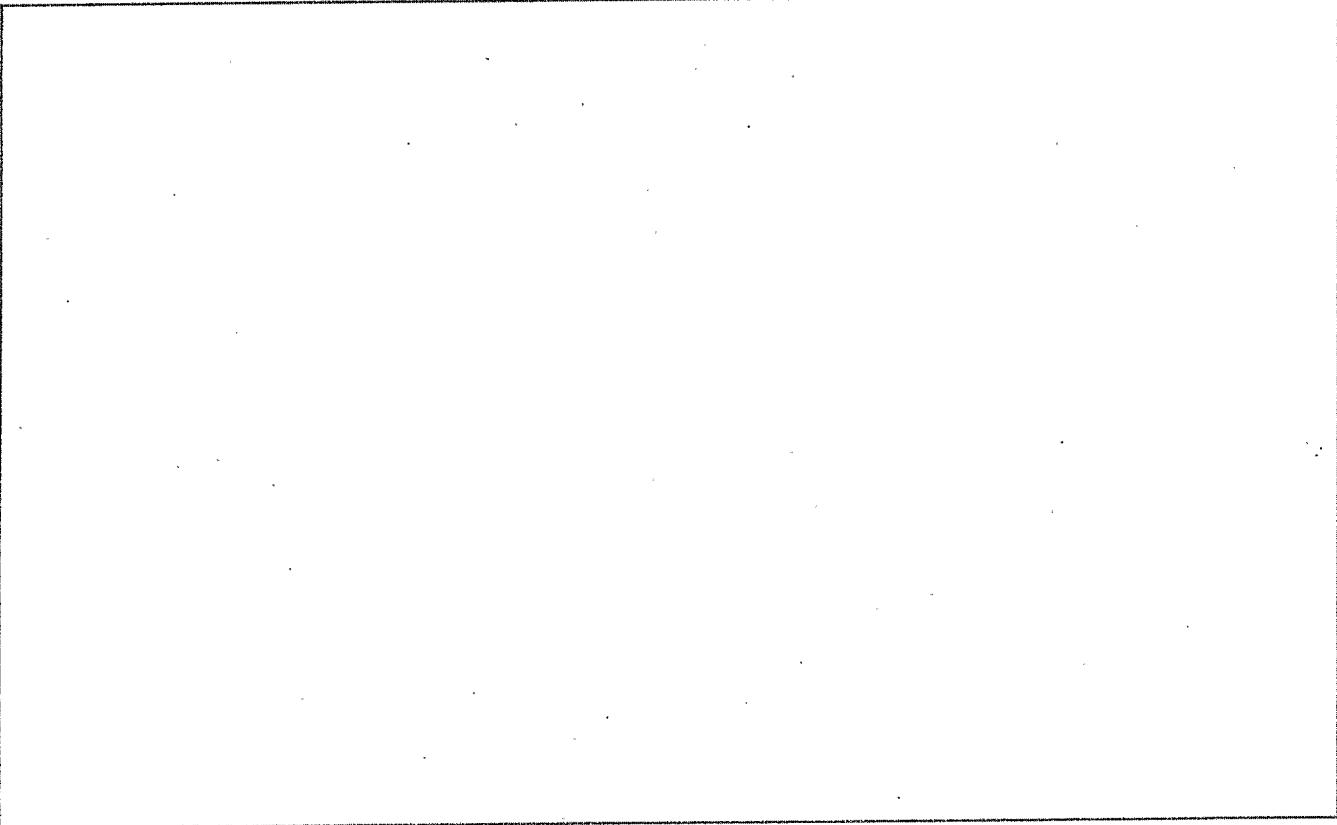
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